

We need to work together to keep your taxes low. At a time of economic challenge, the last thing American families need is a massive tax increase. It's not too late for Congress to make the tax relief we passed in 2001 and 2003 permanent.

Despite our economic difficulties, there is every reason to be optimistic about America's future. Our workforce is dynamic and productive. Our economy is showing that it is resilient. And our Nation is the most industrious, creative, and prosperous on Earth.

Laura and I wish you a safe and joyous Labor Day weekend. Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on August 29 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 30. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 29 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Federal Emergency Management Agency

August 31, 2008

I'm here at the FEMA Headquarters where I just received a briefing, and I've also come to thank the people behind me for working the long hours that they're doing to make sure that we've got the preparations in place for Hurricane Gustav. There's been a lot of work done to get ready for the storm. Across the gulf coast, there's Governors and State officials and local leaders that are taking this storm very seriously and are preparing proactively.

Secretary Chertoff and FEMA Administrator Paulison report that the Federal Government has prepositioned teams of emergency managers, doctors, ambulances, search and rescue teams, aircraft, and commodities throughout the region. There are millions of meals and millions of liters of water prestaged, as well as a lot of blankets and

cots. In other words, there's a lot of preparations that have gone in, in anticipation of this storm.

We're working with Governors to identify and secure out-of-State shelter for people in the path of the storm. Several States, including Missouri, Texas, and New Mexico, are in the—are preparing to and have accepted a lot of evacuees. People are leaving those areas that are of concern, and we're working hard to make sure that they have a place to go.

The Army Corps of Engineers informs me that while the levees are stronger than they've ever been, people across the gulf coast, especially in New Orleans, need to understand that in a storm of this size there is serious risk of significant flooding.

The message to the people of the gulf coast is, this storm is dangerous. There's a real possibility of flooding, storm surge, and high winds. And therefore, it is very important for you to follow the instructions and direction of State and local officials. Do not put yourself in harm's way or make rescue workers take unnecessary risks. And know that the American people stand with you, and that we'll face this emergency together.

In the coming days, I encourage people across our Nation to help their neighbors in need. You can contribute to charities such as the Red Cross. You can volunteer your time to help those in need. And of course, you can pray for those who might be suffering.

In light of these events, I will not be going to Minnesota for the Republican National Convention. I'm going to travel down to Texas tomorrow to visit with the Emergency Operations Center in Austin, where coordination among Federal, State, and local government officials is occurring. I intend to go down to San Antonio, where State and local officials are prepositioning relief materials for Texas and Louisiana. And I'll have a chance to visit with residents of both States who have been evacuated.

I will not be traveling to Louisiana tomorrow because I do not want my visit to impede in any way the response of our emergency personnel. I've been talking to the Governors, yesterday and today; I also spoke with Mayor Nagin of New Orleans to make sure that they're getting everything they need from the Federal Government to prepare for what all anticipate will be a difficult situation. I hope to be able to go to Louisiana as soon as conditions permit.

This Nation has come to know the strong and resilient spirit of the people of the gulf coast. They've made it through great challenges in the past, and they're going to make it through this one as well. In the meantime, all those preparing for this storm are in our thoughts and our prayers, from me and Laura and our whole Nation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:24 p.m. at the FEMA Operations Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Briefing at the Emergency Operations Center in Austin, Texas

September 1, 2008

Governor, thank you; Senator, thank you for coming; Members of Congress.

The coordination on this storm is a lot better than on—than during Katrina. A lot of it had to do with the Governors. Yesterday I was on the video conference with the Governors of Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. There was clearly a spirit of sharing assets, of listening to somebody's problems and saying, how can we best address them? The Federal Government is very much involved in helping the States. Our job is to assist. That's why Secretary Paulson is with me today; he heads FEMA.

I do want to thank the State of Texas and other States for welcoming citizens from

Louisiana. It's been a huge evacuation. It's hard for a citizen to pull up stakes and move out of their home and face the uncertainty that comes when you're not at home. And I want to thank those citizens who listened carefully to the local authorities and evacuated. And I want to thank my fellow citizens in Texas and in other States for welcoming these folks in open arms. The State of Texas is a generous State. And, Governor, I wanted to thank you and your team for being so kind to the people.

And it's very important for those who have been evacuated to listen very carefully to the officials in their respective States before they decide to return. This storm is yet to pass. It's a serious event. And as the Governor mentioned, the people of east Texas got to be prepared for a possible flooding event.

All in all, what I look for is to determine whether or not assets are in place to help, whether or not there's coordination, and whether or not there's preparation for recovery. And to that end, I feel good about this event.

And I do want to thank Gail McGovern of the American Red Cross for joining us, and thank a lot of the other organizations that are preparing to go help people in need. These organizations such as the American Red Cross and the Salvation Army require the support of our citizens.

And if you're interested in how you can help once the storm passes, please call up the different web sites of these organizations, and donate your time or your money so that the recovery effort is as compassionate and complete as possible.

Governor, thanks for having me. I want to thank your team for all the hard work they're doing. I'm looking forward to going in with you in the room next door to say thanks to the people that are working the long hours. And we're going to go down to San Antonio and see a staging area there and thank the people there for working so hard, not only on behalf of the citizens of Texas but on behalf of the people of the region.